

# Appendix B: Dictionary of Terms

**cancer continuum**

The spectrum of cancer-related experience, including prevention, early detection, diagnosis, treatment, life after cancer, and end of life.

**carcinogen**

Any substance that causes cancer.

**clinical trial**

A research study that tests how well new medical treatments or other interventions work in people.

**esophagus**

The tube through which food passes from the mouth to the stomach.

**fecal occult blood test (FOBT)**

An exam of the stool that can find hidden blood, a sign of possible colorectal cancer. The FOBT also can find bleeding from other disorders.

**incidence rate (for cancer)**

The number of new cancer cases per 100,000 people, per year.

**invasive cancer**

Cancer that has spread beyond the layer of tissue in which it developed into surrounding, healthy tissue.

**larynx**

The voice box.

**leukemia**

Cancer of the blood-forming tissue.

**mammography**

The use of x-rays to create a picture of the breast (mammogram) that can show signs of breast cancer before it can be felt.

**mortality rate (for cancer)**

The number of cancer deaths per 100,000 people, per year.

**outcomes**

The outcomes of cancer care are the end results of interventions to prevent, detect, and treat cancer on the health and well-being of people and populations. Such outcomes include survival and disease-free survival, health-related quality of life (including ability to carry out usual activities), patient symptoms (such as pain and shortness of breath), economic burden, and patient and family experience and satisfaction with care.

**Pap smear**

The collection of cells from the cervix (the lower, narrow end of the uterus that forms a canal between the uterus and vagina) and their examination under a microscope. The Pap smear (or Pap test) is used to detect changes that may be cancer or may lead to cancer.

**pharynx**

The throat.

**screening**

Using tests to check for a disease in its early stage, when there are no symptoms. For example, mammography is a screening test that can find breast cancer before it can be felt.

**sigmoidoscopy**

An exam of the rectum and the lower part of the colon with a thin, flexible, lighted tube to find polyps, abnormal areas, and tumors. Also called proctosigmoidoscopy.

**socioeconomic status**

A measure of a person's relative standing in society, frequently based on a combination of income, education, and occupation.

**statistical significance (of a trend)**

Results of a test to find out if a trend really is rising or falling, or whether any apparent rise or fall can be explained by random variation in the measurement.

**survival (cancer)**

As used in this report, the proportion of cancer patients surviving cancer 5 years after their diagnosis.

**trend**

The general direction (for example, rising, falling, or stable) of change over time.